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UNCLAS OTTAWA 003474

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP AND WHA/CAN
STATE FOR TSUNAMI TASKFORCE 1

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [AEMR](#) [CASC](#) [CA](#) [FAC](#)

SUBJECT: TFX001: CANADA RESPONDS QUICKLY TO TSUNAMIS

1. Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC) tells us that as of December 29, three Canadians are confirmed dead, and approximately 60 are still missing. Of the three dead, two died in Thailand and one in Sri Lanka. Forty-eight of the missing Canadians were in Thailand, with the majority of the rest missing from Sri Lanka. Although volume is down today, FAC's emergency hotline is still busy, and of the original roughly 2000 welfare/whereabouts inquiries received so far, 600 have been resolved. FAC has called in 25 officers to respond to callers.

Initial response

2. On December 26, Prime Minister Paul Martin issued a statement of condolence and pledged Canada's support. The GOC promised an initial C\$1 million (about US\$800,000) in humanitarian assistance and followed up the next day with a further pledge of C\$3 million (US\$2.4 million).

3. The GOC has sent a CC-150 Polaris plane to Colombo (expected to land tomorrow) with essential emergency materials such as blankets, water tablets, and generators but does not yet have plans to mobilize the Canadian Forces Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), stating that no government has yet made a formal request for the mobile field hospital team. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) will assess the situation to determine what additional assistance will be required.

Tragedy strikes close to home for many in Canada

4. Canada's Diaspora from the affected region numbers in the hundreds of thousands. FAC is directing private citizens who wish to donate money to contact the International Red Cross, OXFAM, and CARE Canada. Private donations from Canadian residents and citizens have reached over C\$3 million (US\$2.4 million) and are growing quickly. NGOs are still being flooded with contributions. Families with relatives in affected areas have been directed to contact the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa at 1-800-387-3124, the hotline mentioned above.

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POWELL